

REMARKS

I. Formalities

Claims 1-4, 6-31, and 34-44 remain in the subject patent application. Claims 32 and 33 have been canceled, and claims 4, 6, 11, 12, 14-18, 21, 22, 25, 26, 31, and 38-40 have been amended herein. Claim 5 was canceled in an earlier paper.

Support for the amendments to claim 4 can be found in the pending application at least at page 28, lines 22-26, and in FIG. 9. Support for the amendments to claim 6 can be found at least in claim 3 of the patent application as originally filed. Support for the amendments to claim 11 can be found at least in claim 3 of the pending application as originally filed. Support for the amendments to claim 14 can be found in the pending application at least at page 24, lines 1-11. Support for the amendments to claim 15 can be found in the pending application at least at page 28, lines 17-20, and in FIG. 9. Support for the amendments to claim 16 can be found in the pending application at least at page 24, lines 1-11, at page 28, lines 17-20, and at page 53, lines 7-11. Support for the amendments to claims 17, 18, 21, 22, 25, 26, and 38 can be found in the pending application at least in claim 1 and in FIG. 2. Support for the amendments to claims 39 and 40 can be found in the pending application at least at page 31, lines 16-22 and in FIG. 14.

Claims 12 and 31 were amended solely to correct minor typographical errors and/or to correct minor informalities related to antecedent basis therein.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter is added herein.

II. Response to the Claim Objection

Claim 31 was objected to because the phrase “the slot” did not have antecedent basis. Claim 31 has been amended so as to provide proper antecedent basis for the subject phrase, and is thus now in condition for allowance.

III. Response to the Claim Rejections

Claim 32 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,716,959 to Bernardi (hereinafter “Bernardi”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,660,017 to Houghton (hereinafter “Houghton”). Claim 33 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 1,883,376 to Hilpert et al. (hereinafter “Hilpert”) in view of Houghton and U.S. Patent No. 1,693,987 to Koelkebeck (hereinafter “Koelkebeck”).

In the spirit of cooperation, and in an attempt to expedite the prosecution of the patent application, Applicants have canceled claims 32 and 33 herein.

IV. Comments Regarding the Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action indicated that claims 1-4, 6-31, and 34-44 are allowed. Applicants wish to thank Examiner Glessner for this indication of allowance. As noted above, claims 4, 6, 11, 12, 14-18, 21, 22, 25, 26, 31, and 38-40 have been amended herein. The amendments were made in order to correct some informalities that were found in the claims, and to more fully and distinctly claim that which Applicants consider to be their invention. Applicants submit that the amendments to the listed claims are such that they do not expand the scope of what is claimed beyond that which was previously allowed, and that approval of the amendments may be granted without a new search being performed and requiring that the references cited earlier be referred to anew.

It is believed that the cancellation of claims 32 and 33 and the amendment of claim 31 herein dispense with the issues raised in the Office Action. As stated above, the amendments to the allowed claims are believed to be such that they can be readily approved. The issuance of a notice of allowance is therefore respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. In light of the amendments and remarks set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims should be allowed, and respectfully request that a notice of allowance be issued.

All fees believed to be due in connection with the filing of this paper are submitted herewith. However, the Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to charge any required fees, or credit any overpayment, to Account No. 02-4467.

If there are matters that can be discussed by telephone to further the prosecution of this application, Applicants invite Examiner Glessner to call the undersigned attorney at the Examiner's convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth A. Nelson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kenneth" and last name "Nelson" clearly distinguishable.

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37 C.F.R. §1.34(a)
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CERTIFICATE OF EXPRESS MAILING UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.10.

I hereby certify that this document (and any as referred to as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service, mailing label No. **EL452288098US** on **October 15, 2004** and addressed to Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Name:



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